
THE SIR EDMUND HILLARY EXPLORER

“Adventure for the sake of a dream, for the pleasure of searching”
- Sir Edmund Hillary

SOUTH ISLAND RAIL & COACH TOUR

Departing Christchurch 28 March - 9 April 2022
13 Day Tour



Inspired by one of the greatest and most iconic adventurers of our time, The Sir Edmund Hillary Explorer invites you on an epic journey by rail and luxury coach throughout the majestic South Island of Aotearoa.



THE SIR EDMUND HILLARY EXPLORER

Sir Edmund Hillary epitomised the New Zealand spirit of adventure and he is our inspiration when planning your experience of a lifetime.

We pay homage to Sir Edmund Hillary and learn more about his achievements and humanitarian efforts as we explore the South Island of New Zealand and experience the postcard perfect vistas and dramatic alpine scenery that this part of the world is renowned for.

You will start your journey departing Christchurch on the iconic TranzAlpine via Arthur's Pass. Then we begin the traverse inland on luxury coaches to experience the wonders of Franz Josef, Queenstown, Te Anau and Milford Sound. Outside of Queenstown, a return journey between Kingston & Fairlight on the iconic Kingston Flyer steam train will be the icing on the cake for our railfans.

At the beginning of the main rail trunk line in Invercargill, you will be hauled by two magnificent heritage 1950's DA locomotives in an impressive and powerful double-header formation. Travel the entire length of the South Island in the comfort of

vintage carriages, staying in Dunedin, Aoraki/Mount Cook (detour inland by coach), Christchurch, Kaikoura & Blenheim.

From Kaikoura to Blenheim, you will be hauled under a full head of steam by the historic WW1 memorial steam locomotive Ab608 Passchendaele, named in honour of our fallen soldiers at The Battle of Passchendaele in 1917.

TOUR OPTIONS

TOUR OPTION 1:

13-DAY TOUR Departing Wellington
from 26 March – 7 April 2022

TOUR OPTION 2:

12-DAY TOUR Departing Blenheim
from 27 March – 7 April 2022

TOUR OPTION 3:

13-DAY TOUR Departing Christchurch
from 28 March – 9 April 2022

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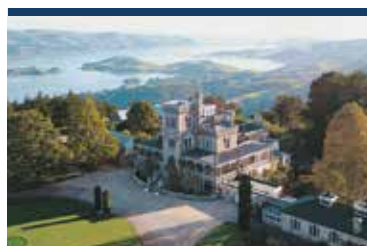
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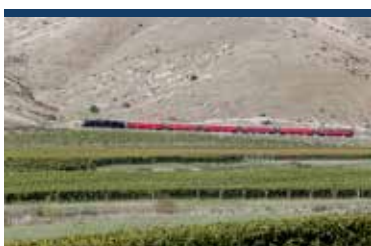
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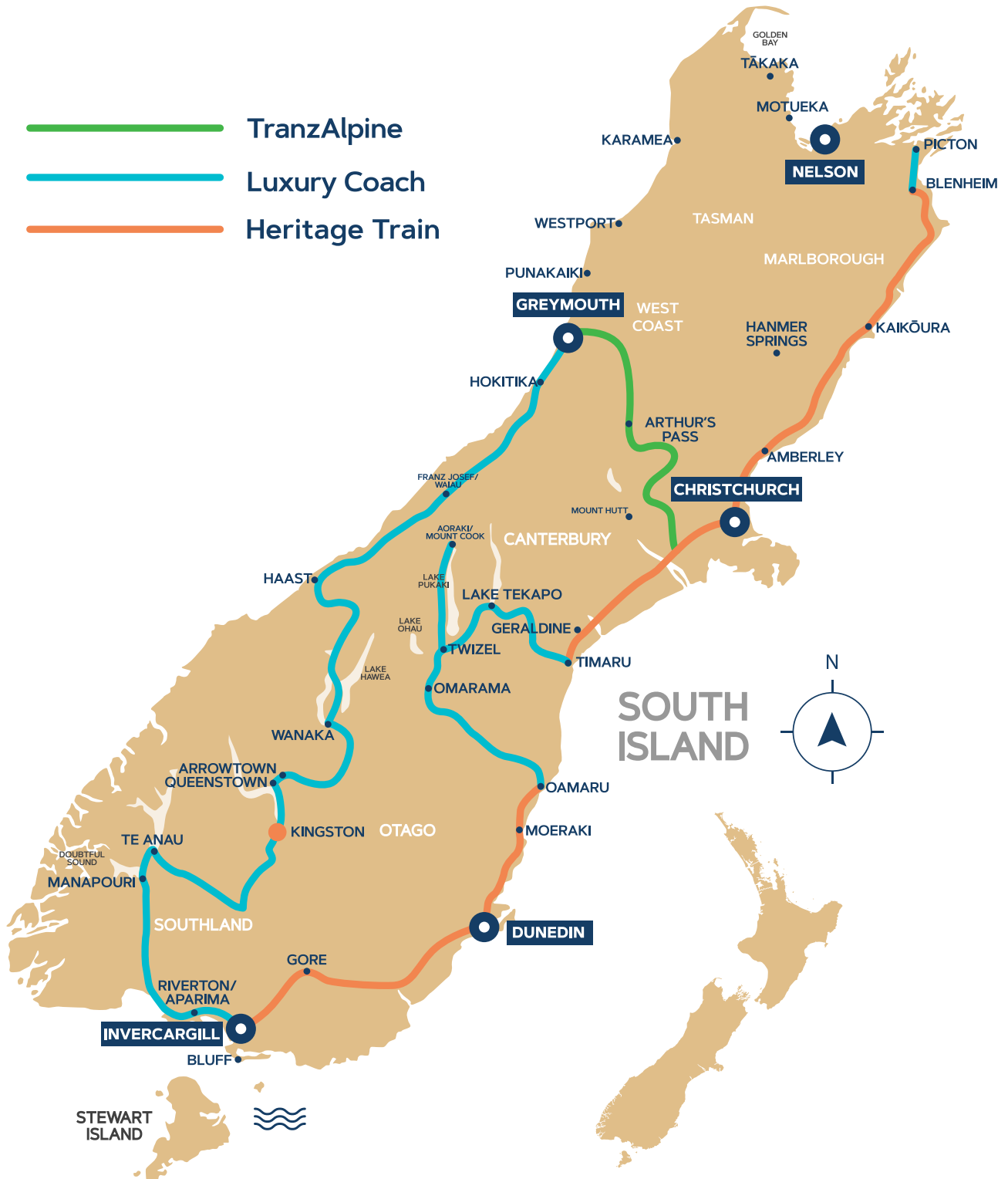


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13-DAY TOUR DEPARTING CHRISTCHURCH 28 MARCH - 9 APRIL 2022



13-DAY TOUR DEPARTING CHRISTCHURCH

28 MARCH - 9 APRIL 2022

Your journey begins in Christchurch, where the iconic TranzAlpine awaits. Often regarded to be one of the world's great train journeys for the scenery through which it passes. The journey is 223 kilometres one-way, taking almost five hours. You will see epic vistas, travel the edges of the ice-fed Waimakariri River, traverse the majestic Canterbury Plains and Southern Alps, and see miles of native beech forest. The tour is escorted by a fleet of luxury coaches that provide seamless transfers from the train to your accommodation each evening.

Wake up the following day in Franz Josef, where guests are encouraged to wind down and enjoy some well-deserved pampering at the Franz Josef Glacier Hot Pools.

Departing the West Coast, we will travel through the Haast Pass, journeying through native beech forest and over the Southern Alps. This remote area has a ruggedly beautiful landscape of vast rainforests, gushing waterfalls and snow-capped mountains.

Journeying through Makarora on the border of Mount Aspiring World Heritage Park, we pass by the crystal-clear waters of Lake Wanaka, Lake Hawea, Lake Dunstan and ride the iconic Kingston Flyer between Kingston and Fairlight. The adventure playground of Queenstown awaits - cap off a special day as we take in The Remarkables Mountain Range and the view of Lake Wakatipu from the hotel.

Queenstown highlights include the historic and picturesque goldmining town, Arrowtown, on the banks of the Arrow River and taking in the Lakes District Museum. We join a lake cruise on board the historic TSS Earnslaw, the 1912 Edwardian steamboat, which takes us across Lake Wakatipu to Walter Peak High Country Farm for gourmet BBQ lunch.

Departing Queenstown and onto the Fiordland National Park district, where we spend a couple of awe-inspiring days experiencing the wonders of Te Anau and Milford Sound.

At the beginning of the main rail trunk line in Invercargill, you will board the train and be hauled by two heritage 1950's Da locomotives in an impressive double-header formation in their dramatic racing colours.

Continuing north via Dunedin, where we explore places of interest such as a decadent high tea at Larnach Castle or the option to visit the Albatross Colony and Fort Tairaroa.

Arriving in Oamaru by rail, luxury coaches then provide the link inland to Aoraki/Mt Cook, the tallest mountain in New Zealand - a familiar playground of Sir Edmund Hillary where he developed his climbing skills in preparation for the ascent of Everest. Highlights include dinner with celebrity guest speaker, Peter Hillary, son of Sir Edmund Hillary, and a visit to Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre.

Journeying back to the coast to meet the train in Timaru and continue north by rail to Christchurch. We then continue onwards to spectacular Kaikoura, home of resident whales, where the great mountains of the Southern Alps rise from the depths of the Pacific Ocean. Depart Kaikoura steam-hauled by WW1 memorial steam locomotive Ab608 Passchendaele towards the famous Marlborough wine region boasting over 100 vineyards.

The final day and the port town of Picton awaits with one of the most scenic picturesque ferry crossings in the world. We weave our way through the Queen Charlotte Sound and cruise across the Cook Strait to the harbour city of Wellington. Tour ends.

DAY	DATE	ITINERARY	HOTEL	MODE
Pre Tour	Sun 27 March	Pre-tour registration at hotel from 2:30pm – 5:30pm (optional)	Novotel Cathedral Square (optional)	
1	Mon 28 March	CHRISTCHURCH - ARTHUR'S PASS - FRANZ JOSEF Registration at Christchurch Railway Station TranzAlpine Franz Josef Hotpools Meal Inclusions - Dinner	Scenic Hotel Franz Josef	TranzAlpine
2	Tue 29 March	FRANZ JOSEF - QUEENSTOWN Helicopter glacier tour (Optional) Haast Pass canyon lookout Meal Inclusions - Breakfast & Dinner (lunch on your own)	Novotel Lakeside Hotel	Coach
3	Wed 30 March	QUEENSTOWN TSS Earnslaw & Walter Peak Homestead Gourmet BBQ Lunch Arrowtown - Lakes District Museum Meal Inclusions - Breakfast & Lunch (dinner on your own)	Novotel Lakeside Hotel	Coach / Steam Ship
4	Thur 31 March	QUEENSTOWN - TE ANAU Kingston Flyer Takahe bird sanctuary Meal Inclusions - Breakfast & Dinner (lunch on your own)	Distinction Hotel Luxmore	Coach / Steam Train
5	Fri 1 April	TE ANAU - MILFORD SOUND - TE ANAU Coach along Eglinton Valley to Milford Sound via Homer Tunnel Milford Sound Cruise Meal Inclusions - Breakfast, Lunch on cruise & Dinner	Distinction Hotel Luxmore	Coach / Cruise
6	Sat 2 April	TE ANAU - INVERCARGILL - DUNEDIN Coach from Te Anau to Invercargill & Train to Dunedin Meal Inclusions - Breakfast, Picnic lunch & Dinner	Scenic Hotel Southern Cross	Coach / Diesel Loco
7	Sun 3 April	DUNEDIN Larnach Castle morning tea Albatross Colony & Fort Tairaroa Tour (Optional) Meal Inclusions - Breakfast & Morning Tea (dinner on your own)	Scenic Hotel Southern Cross	Coach
8	Mon 4 April	DUNEDIN - OAMARU - AORAKI/MT COOK Train to Oamaru & Coach to Aoraki/Mt Cook Meal Inclusions - Breakfast, Picnic lunch & Dinner	Hermitage Hotel	Diesel Loco / Coach
9	Tue 5 April	AORAKI/MT COOK Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre & scenic drive Helicopter tour, scenic flight (Optional) Dinner with celebrity guest speaker, Peter Hillary Meal Inclusions - Breakfast & Dinner (lunch on your own)	Hermitage Hotel	Coach
10	Wed 6 April	AORAKI/MT COOK - TIMARU - CHRISTCHURCH Coach to Timaru & Train to Christchurch Charter Tram Ride Meal Inclusions - Breakfast, Picnic lunch & Dinner	Novotel Cathedral Square	Coach / Diesel Loco
11	Thur 7 April	CHRISTCHURCH - KAIKOURA Christchurch Antarctic Centre Train to Kaikoura Meal Inclusions - Breakfast, Picnic lunch & Dinner	The White Morph Hotel and equivalent	Diesel Loco
12	Fri 8 April	KAIKOURA – KEKERENGU – BLENHEIM Whale watching cruise, scenic flights (Optional) Lunch at Kekerengu "The Store" Meal Inclusions - Breakfast, Picnic lunch & Dinner	Chateau Marlborough and equivalent	Steam Train
13	Sat 9 April	BLENHEIM - PICTON - WELLINGTON Excursion to Omaka Aviation Heritage Centre (Optional) The Wine Station - wine tasting Coach to Picton. Interislander ferry to Wellington Tour ends Meal inclusions – Breakfast	James Cook Grand Chancellor (optional)	Coach / Ferry

Please note that this Itinerary is subject to change

DAY 1 Monday 28th March 2022

Christchurch – Arthur’s Pass – Franz Josef

There is an optional pre-tour Registration at the Novotel Cathedral Square Hotel to meet your fellow explorers and tour guides from 2:30pm – 5:30pm on 27th March.

Your journey begins at Christchurch Railway Station, where the iconic TranzAlpine awaits. Often regarded to be one of the world’s great train journeys for the scenery through which it passes. The journey is 223 kilometres one-way, taking almost five hours. You will see epic vistas, travel the edges of the ice-fed Waimakariri River, traverse the majestic Canterbury Plains and Southern Alps, and see miles of native beech forest.

Luxury coaches await in Greymouth to transport you to your hotel in the ruggedly beautiful Franz Josef. Finish your day with some well-deserved pampering at the local Glacier Hot Pools.

Passengers stay at the Scenic Hotel Franz Josef.



DAY 2 Tuesday 29th March 2022

Franz Josef – Queenstown

Wake up to enjoy the option for a helicopter tour of the Franz Josef glacier. Leaving Franz Josef, we travel along the West Coast through the Haast Pass, journeying through native beech forest and over the Southern Alps. This remote area has a ruggedly beautiful landscape of vast rainforests, gushing waterfalls and snow-capped mountains. Continuing through Makarora on the border of Mount Aspiring World Heritage Park, we pass by the crystal-clear waters of Lake Wanaka, Lake Hawea and Lake Dunstan.

The adventure playground of Queenstown then awaits! Cap off a special day as we take in The Remarkables Mountain Range and the view of Lake Wakatipu from the hotel.

Passengers stay at in the Novotel Lakeside Hotel in Queenstown, centrally located on the shores of Lake Wakatipu.





DAY 3 Wednesday 30th March 2022

Queenstown

Wake up to join a lake cruise on board the historic TSS Earnslaw, the 1912 Edwardian steamboat, which takes us across Lake Wakatipu to Walter Peak High Country Farm for a gourmet BBQ lunch.

Enjoy an afternoon visit to the historic and picturesque goldmining town, Arrowtown, with a visit to the Lakes District Museum.

Passengers stay at in the Novotel Lakeside Hotel in Queenstown, centrally located on the shores of Lake Wakatipu.



DAY 4 Thursday 31st March 2022

Queenstown – Kingston – Te Anau

Departing Queenstown, we continue to the village of Kingston which is nestled on southernmost end of Lake Wakatipu. Here, the iconic Kingston Flyer Steam Train awaits to take you on a memorable journey between Kingston & Fairlight.

Then, we enter the Fiordland National Park district, continuing to traverse the Southern Scenic Route, our journey calls in to visit the Takahe Bird Sanctuary. Takahe are the stars of the show and meeting these prehistoric-looking characters is a 'must do' for Fiordland visitors. The sanctuary is a large part of the success of the Takahe Recovery Programme.

We spend a couple of awe-inspiring days experiencing the wonders of Te Anau and Milford Sound.

Passengers stay at Distinction Hotel Luxmore.

DAY 5

Friday 1st April 2022

Te Anau – Milford Sound – Te Anau

Traveling along the Milford Road (between Te Anau and Milford) is one of the finest alpine drives in the world. The scenery is exceptional, ranging from broad grassy flats, dense rainforest and towering mountains through to glacial lakes and alpine herb fields. A day tour to Milford Sound offers some of the most spectacular natural scenery to be viewed anywhere in the world. Board the coach and travel through stunning scenery along the Milford Road and into Fiordland, where your cruise boat awaits you. The tour includes a cruise around the fiord so you can experience its wonders up close and see landmarks like Mitre Peak and amazing wildlife, such as dolphins and seals. Cruise the inner most reaches of Milford Sound to the open Tasman Sea and back.

A one-day itinerary is enough to see all the beautiful views along the way, take a scenic cruise around the fiord, and get back to Te Anau in time for dinner.

Passengers stay at Distinction Hotel Luxmore.



DAY 6

Saturday 2nd April 2022

Te Anau – Dunedin

Depart Te Anau for Invercargill, where we will discover the beginning of the main rail trunk line. Here you will board vintage carriages and be hauled north by two heritage 1950's DA locomotives in an impressive double-header formation in their dramatic racing colours. The train winds its way towards the town of Gore, and then turns towards the coast on the way to Dunedin.

Passengers will stay at Scenic Hotel Southern Cross which is Dunedin's most established hotel, nestled in the heart of the city.

Dunedin

Situated on the picturesque Otago Peninsula, Larnach Castle is one of New Zealand's premier visitor attractions. Lovingly restored by the Barker Family, the Castle and surrounding grounds are at the heart of the Dunedin visitor experience. Arrive in time for refreshing high tea in the Ballroom Café followed by a guided garden tour. In the afternoon, there is the option to explore the 'hidden' underground Fort Tiaroa - the fort was established over 100 years ago to counter the threat of invasion from Tsarist Russia and is located underneath the Albatross colony. This is the only mainland breeding colony of Royal Albatross in the world.

Passengers will stay at Scenic Hotel Southern Cross which is Dunedin's most established hotel, nestled in the heart of the city.

*Dunedin – Aoraki / Mt Cook*

Departing from Dunedin by rail, we continue to hug the coast towards Oamaru. We then detour inland by luxury coach via Omarama and Pukaki towards the spectacular Aoraki / Mt Cook. Here, we find the home of the tallest mountain in New Zealand, which helped Sir Edmund Hillary to develop his climbing skills in preparation for the conquest of Mt Everest. Recognised as part of the Te Wahipounamu UNESCO World Heritage Area, the National Park is a breath-taking environment of glaciers, terminal lakes, turbulent rivers and Australasia's tallest peak, the mighty Aoraki / Mt Cook soaring above at 3,724 metres. There is the option after dinner to enjoy star-gazing at the Planetarium, digitally immersed in what has been voted the world's largest "International Dark Sky Reserve".

Passengers will stay at the iconic Hermitage Hotel with majestic mountain views.





DAY 9 Tuesday 5th April 2022

Aoraki / Mt Cook

Enjoy a leisurely morning and then a visit to the Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre, which is a tribute to New Zealand's global icon as well as discovering New Zealand's colourful transport, climbing and hotel history. Followed by a scenic drive through the National Park surrounded by the silent splendour of the Southern Alps.

Afternoon optional activities include a glacier helicopter tour or a scenic flight with expert pilots navigating their way over a glacial lake, passing soaring mountain tops over NZ's longest glacier - the 600 metre thick, Tasman Glacier. Dinner that evening is with celebrity guest speaker, Peter Hillary, son of Sir Edmund Hillary.

Passengers will stay at the iconic Hermitage Hotel with majestic mountain views.



DAY 10 Wednesday 6th April 2022

Aoraki / Mt Cook – Christchurch

A morning departure from the hotel leaving Aoraki/ Mt Cook by coach, we journey back to the coast via the Fairlie & Tekapo to meet the train in Timaru and continue north by rail to Christchurch. After check-in, be collected at your hotel by a privately chartered Tram for a historic tram journey around the city before dinner.

Passengers will stay at the centrally located Novotel Cathedral Square.





DAY 11 Thursday 7th April 2022

Christchurch – Kaikoura

“Where the mountains meet the sea”

A morning visit to explore modern day Antarctica at the International Antarctic Centre and experience a taste of this unique and breath-taking continent – just like the explorers before you. Departing Christchurch, our destination is Kaikoura, home of resident whales, where the guardians of the seas – the mountains of the Southern Alps – rise majestically from the deep trenches of the Pacific Ocean. Several different species of whale can be seen off the coast of Kaikoura at different times of the year, and most of the time, the huge resident Sperm Whales can be sighted. The ocean trench just off the coast means sperm whales are often seen close to shore.

Passengers will stay at The White Morph Hotel (or equivalent), taking in spectacular views of the Kaikoura Esplanade.



DAY 12

Friday 8th April 2022

Kaikoura – Blenheim

Wake up to optional excursions for whale, dolphin and seal watching (by boat or plane). We then introduce you to the star of the tour, the historic WW1 memorial steam locomotive Ab608 Passchendaele, (named in honour of our fallen soldiers at The Battle of Passchendaele in 1917.) It is “all aboard” and we continue to take in the spectacular coastal journey as we depart Kaikoura. We steam ahead for Kekerengu where we disembark for lunch overlooking the Pacific Ocean at “The Store”. Then onwards north via the Dashwood Pass and Awatere Valley into Blenheim – the famous Marlborough wine region boasting over 100 vineyards.

Passengers will stay at the luxurious Chateau Marlborough, a modern and stylish property located in the heart of Blenheim.



DAY 13

Saturday 9th April 2022

Blenheim – Picton – Wellington

On the final day of the tour, there is the option to visit Omaka Aviation Heritage Centre. Departing Blenheim, we visit The Wine Station and then we coach from Blenheim to Picton, where one of the most picturesque ferry crossings in the world awaits. We weave our way through the Queen Charlotte Sound and cruise across the Cook Strait to the harbour city of Wellington. Tour ends.

INCLUSIONS: For your convenience the following has all been included in your tour price.

ACCOMMODATION

We have selected minimum 4-star standard accommodation for Sir Edmund Hillary Explorer Tour in order to ensure the comfort and quality of your experience for this journey of a lifetime.

LUXURY COACHES & TOUR OPTIONS

The fleet of luxury coaches will escort the train throughout the journey, providing seamless transfers to your accommodation and excursions. You will be accompanied by experienced Tour Leaders who are there to guide and assist you throughout your journey.

PREPAID ATTRACTIONS (INCLUDED)

- TranzAlpine Rail Journey
- Franz Josef Hot Pools
- Walter Peak Homestead
- Cruise Lake Wakatipu on the TSS Earnslaw
- Arrowtown Lakes District Museum
- Kingston Flyer ride
- Milford Sound Day Trip & Cruise
- Takahe Sanctuary
- High Tea & Garden Tour at Larnach Castle
- Celebrity guest speaker, Peter Hillary
- Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre at Aoraki/ Mt Cook
- International Antarctic Centre
- Private Tram Charter, Christchurch
- Visit to The Store, Kekerengu
- Wine tasting at The Wine Station, Blenheim
- Cruise on the Interislander Ferry

INCLUSIONS - MEALS

- 12 cooked breakfasts
- 10 sumptuous dinners
- High Tea at Larnach Castle

- Gourmet BBQ lunch at Walter Peak Homestead
- Other included lunches: Milford Sounds, Invercargill, Oamaru, Timaru, Christchurch & Kekerengu (other lunches on your own)

EXCLUSIONS:

Flights to and from your points of arrival/departure are not included. Pre and post tour accommodation is optional and also not included.

PLEASE NOTE:

For your own enjoyment and safety during the tour, please note that a reasonable level of fitness and mobility is required as there will be the need to climb and descend stairs (on coaches, excursions and at hotels), carry your own bag and walk some distances on uneven ground.

13-DAY TOUR FROM CHRISTCHURCH

Per Person Sharing \$6,950

Single Supplement \$995

- Package price includes 2x complimentary beverage vouchers to be enjoyed on board each heritage train day

BOOKINGS

A 10% deposit is required to secure a booking, 40% in December 2021 and the balance in February 2022

For all bookings and for further information:

Contact your preferred travel agent for further info or to make a booking.

